

## **900 Series**

**901     Income Eligibility and Household Composition**

**902     TANF Programmatic Reporting**

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<b>Community Services Policy Manual</b>	SUBJECT Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Funds  <b>INCOME ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES AND HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION</b>		EFFECTIVE DATE <b>10-01-07</b> ISSUE DATE <b>11-16-07</b>

## REFERENCES:

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)

Federal Register, Department of Health and Human Services Annual Update of the HHS Poverty Guidelines

## BACKGROUND:

The TANF Agreement, Section II.C.1 states an applicant will be considered eligible whose annual family income is no more than 200 percent of the poverty line.

## POLICY:

CAAs will determine their own policies, based on local decisions, of what specific assistance or services will be provided to eligible families. They will also determine the type, financial limitations and the frequency of any direct monetary services provided as well as any additional non-household composition or income-related eligibility criteria they may add.

## ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for this program, families must meet household composition eligibility **and** income eligibility standards.

## HOUSEHOLD COMPOSITION REQUIREMENTS

Eligible households must include:

- a pregnant member, **or**
- a child under age 18, **or**
- a child age 18 who is in high school full time,

## AND

- the child's parent(s), **or**
- the child's stepparent(s), **or**
- caretaker relative(s) in the absence of the parent(s)/stepparent(s).

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A caretaker relative is a relative who is at least age 18 and related to the child, by blood or adoption, and includes the following:

- Grandparent (including great or great-great)
- Aunt or Uncle (including great or great-great)
- Sibling
- Stepsibling
- Nephew or Niece
- First cousin or first cousin once removed
- The spouse of any of the above, even after the marriage is ended by death or divorce, or
- The parent of the child's putative (alleged) father.

**Note:** If the parent or stepparent is residing in the home with the child, no other adult household member can be considered a member of the household for purposes of TANF eligibility and cannot receive TANF services. *Example:* Mom and her daughter live with Grandmother. Grandmother has a utility shut-off and applies for TANF emergency needs. Only Mom and the daughter are potentially eligible for TANF services, so you cannot pay the shut-off because the bill must be in the name of an eligible household member.

### **Documentation of Household Composition**

Documentation of pregnancy, child(ren)'s presence in the home and an 18 year-old's school attendance is not required unless the situation is questionable. In these cases, the agency may request additional verification(s) and this information should be included in the case file.

### **INCOME GUIDELINES**

#### **Automatic Income Eligibility**

If the local Department of Human Services (DHS) office has determined any member of the household to be currently eligible for any of the program benefits listed below, the household is automatically income eligible for services provided by TANF funds:

- Family Independence Program (FIP)
- Food Assistance Program (FAP)
- Medicaid (MA)
- Child Development and Care (CDC)

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The agency must include file documentation from DHS or the client that verifies program eligibility. This may include copies of a FIP or FAP benefit letter, Medicaid card, or a documented phone conversation with DHS staff.

If the household is not automatically income eligible, the agency must determine income eligibility as follows.

### **Income Eligibility Determination**

Eligible households must be no more than 200% of poverty income requirements based on U.S. Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.

Refer to CSPM Item 208, Poverty Income Guidelines, for the current poverty level guidelines.

The income guidelines are applicable to both farm and non-farm families.

### **Income Includes:**

1. Money wages and salaries before any deductions.
2. Net receipts from non-farm or farm or farm self-employment (receipts from a person's own business or from an owned or rented farm after deductions for business or farm expenses).
3. Regular payments from the Social Security Administration (gross benefits), railroad retirement, unemployment compensation, strike benefits from union funds, worker's compensation, veteran's payments, public assistance (including Family Independence Program-FIP, Supplemental Security Income- SSI, and State Disability Assistance- SDA), training stipends, alimony, child support, and military family allotments.
4. Private pensions, government employee pensions (including military retirement pay), and regular insurance or annuity payments.
5. Dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, periodic receipts from estates or trusts, and net gambling or lottery winnings.
6. Payments received by Native Americans from gaming revenue (casino income).

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### **Income Excludes:**

1. Capital gains.
2. Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, the sale of property, a house, or a car.
3. Tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump sum inheritances, one time insurance payments, or compensation for injury.
4. Non-cash benefits such as the employer paid or union paid portion of health insurance or other employee fringe benefits, food or housing received in lieu of wages, the value of food and fuel produced and consumed on farms, the imputed value of rent from owner-occupied non-farm or farm housing, and federal non-cash benefit programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, Food Assistance Program (as well as cash received in lieu of the Food Assistance Program), school lunches, and housing assistance.
5. Any portion of Social Security benefits deducted to pay Medicare premiums that will not be reimbursed.
6. Income “earned” by a child age 18 and under **and** attending school. **NOTE:** “Earnings” do not include program benefits such as Social Security, Supplemental Security Income, etc.; these **are** included in the total household income.

### **INCOME COMPUTATIONS**

Establish the TANF income computation period and determine the household’s countable income for the period.

Computation Period: The TANF income computation period is 30 days in the future. The 30-day period begins the date the agency receives a signed application for TANF- funded services.

**EXAMPLE 1:** On November 16 the client signs an application at the agency requesting TANF-funded services. The income computation period is November 16 through December 15.

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**EXAMPLE 2:** On September 15 the outreach worker interviews the client in the client's home and receives a signed application. The income computation period is September 15 through October 14.

Countable Income: Verify and determine all non-excluded income the household expects to receive during the income computation period.

### **Documentation of Income**

Projected income must be thoroughly documented. The following items are acceptable information:

- Copies of paychecks or pay stubs;
- Written statements from employers;
- Letters or other documents from income source (e.g. DHS, Social Security, VA), if dated within the last 60 days;
- Unemployment Compensation Benefit check stubs;
- If self-employed, accounting and other business records showing net income;
- Self-declaration of applicant, but only as a last resort;
- Other documents the program operator has reason to believe will verify the projected income of the household member(s).

### **CLIENT FILE**

Agencies must maintain a client file for all recipients of TANF services. At a minimum, the file must include:

1. A copy of the agency's client services application if there is a specific application for any service that is TANF-funded.
2. A copy of all documents used to determine household and income eligibility; including self-declarations and documented phone conversations with case workers. This documentation must identify each member of the household as well as income sources and amounts for each member of the household being served.

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3. **All** calculations for each income source for the next 30 days.
4. The type, and dollar value, if appropriate, of the benefits provided.
5. Documentation of Need for any emergency service provided.
6. See numbers 1 – 3 in the Documentation Requirements section below.

### **Documentation Requirements**

1. A description of the service(s) provided as well as the dollar value of any tangible service (e.g., utility payment, rent payment, voucher for car repairs, enrollment fee at educational institution, etc.) must be maintained in the client file.
2. If a non-tangible service is provided (e.g., case management one-on-one sessions/counseling or attendance at an agency workshop/session/class, etc.), information such as the case manager's name and date of meetings/sessions or name and date of workshop/session/class, etc. must be maintained in the client file.
3. If ongoing (longer than four months) supportive services are provided, you must document that the family meets the "employed" definition (see CSPM Item 307) at the point that "on-going" begins (on or before the fifth month point). This documentation must be maintained in the client file.

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**ISSUANCES AFFECTED:**

**REFERENCES** Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Agreement

**BACKGROUND:** The TANF Agreement, Section II.F., requires the submission of a programmatic report.

**POLICY:** The Grantee is required to submit the TANF Programmatic Narrative Report, DHS-303, within 30 days from the end of the Agreement period. See Item 202, Forms.

The Grantee shall submit one with an original signature and two copies to:

Bureau of Community Action and  
Economic Opportunity  
Department of Human Services  
PO Box 30037  
Grand Tower, Suite 1314  
Lansing, Michigan 48909